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RESIST

*a call to resist
illegitimate authority*

18 August 1970 --- 763 Massachusetts Avenue, Room 4, Cambridge, Mass. 02139 --- Newsletter #45

THE POLITICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF SABOTAGE

(The RESIST newsletter has regularly reported acts of sabotage in some detail, and readers have been encouraged to discuss the politics of these actions. The following article comes from a college teacher friendly to the idea of sabotage in certain circumstances, who prefers to write anonymously.)

Acts of sabotage advance the cause of revolutionary change only when they are widely understood by a mass base as a forceful blow against the enemy. Without political understanding and approval of the target to be sabotaged, this base (as well as the general public which the movement wants to persuade) will be filled with alarm and anxiety. Lacking a political understanding of why acts of sabotage were committed, many people might conclude that these "individual terrorists" would someday attack them or at the very least "kill innocent people".

Within the white community of the U.S. at this time there is such political consciousness only in the anti-war movement, where impeding and destroying the means by which the U.S. Armed Forces carry on the Vietnam War is very well understood by a substantial mass base. American militarism, the mass killer of the Vietnamese, is recognized as an enemy whose actions must be resisted in many ways, including sabotage. Thus, the

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BUILDING A WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SOUTHWEST OHIO

(The following report comes to RESIST from Marj Leslie. Marj works with Southwest Ohio Women's Liberation, which was recently funded by RESIST.)

The Women's Movement in southwest Ohio has developed along many of the same lines that have appeared in other parts of the country. Women in various movement groups began to realize that their needs as women were not being met and that within their organizations they were being taken for granted as the typists and comforters of the men, who were inevitably the leaders. When the sexist attitudes of the men were not dealt with, the women began to meet separately to discuss these and other forms of oppression women are conditioned to accept in a capitalist society. They were soon joined by other women, many of whom had never before been involved in any kind of political group. As the consciousness-raising meetings continued, various project groups developed in different cities. The most common issues were the need for more day care centers and better birth control and abortion counselling and the desire to broaden the movement by getting more information on women's liberation to uninvolved women. For the first time, women worked together as women in organizing the April 15 anti-corporate actions against Bell Telephone Company.

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DAN BERRIGAN: DELEGITIMIZING THE SYSTEM

Dan Berrigan was seized by FBI agents on Block Island, Rhode Island on August 11. He is now in the Federal Penitentiary at Danbury, Connecticut. (Five of the Catonsville Nine went underground instead of turning themselves in on April 9; only one, Mary Moylan, is still at large.) In one of the statements he issued while underground, Berrigan explained why he decided not to surrender:

"There is a mythology abroad in our country, sedulously fostered by liberals and blessed in a remarkably superficial way by a former Supreme Court Justice. It has to do with the moral necessity of joining illegal action to legal consequence. One who acts against the

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destruction of draft files in Baltimore and Catonsville, Maryland (October 27, 1967 and May 17, 1968) by various church-related Catholics found a positive response in the anti-war movement. Since then about 500,000 draft files have been destroyed by various groups such as the Milwaukee 14, the Chicago 15, the Beaver 55, the New York 8, the Boston 8, and the East Coast Conspiracy. Destruction of ROTC buildings has taken place on a number of campuses (e.g., at Washington University in St. Louis, the ROTC building has been fire-bombed three times; the University of Wisconsin's Old Armory was more than half destroyed). Sabotage by military personnel is increasing. For example, Air Force pilots in Vietnam often bomb what they know to be uninhabited areas just to get rid of their loads of bombs. The only plutonium plant in the U.S., which produces an essential missile part, was put out of production for a whole year starting in April, 1968. Two weeks after electric power lines to the plant had been sabotaged, an explosion within the plant and the resulting fire caused extensive damage. Draft boards, recruiting stations, and induction centers have been the targets of sabotage in the past two years, and various research projects conducted by civilian firms under contract to the military have been sabotaged. The most effective of the latter, and the least publicized, was the Beaver 55's raid on the Dow Chemical Company's headquarters. The Beavers erased computer tapes on which were stored all of the data from Dow's biological and chemical warfare research program!

The political impact of sabotage on targets other than anti-war ones is less clear. Police stations and banks as targets have produced discrepant political responses. The black and student communities highly approve of police station destruction; others do not. Banks, on the other hand, are surprisingly detested throughout the general population, as shown by the positive reaction to the burning of the Bank of America branch in Isla Vista, Calif. In the black community, there is strong approval for liberating and/or burning down various retail establishments owned by white exploiters. These white merchants are clearly defined as the enemy of the black community; hence, destruction of their property is viewed sympathetically.

In contrast, the bombings of the office buildings of Mobil Oil, IBM, the New York Stock Exchange, etc. had a largely negative political impact. Most people have little sense that

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On June 17 draft records were destroyed in Dover, Georgetown, and Wilmington, Delaware (see newsletter #44 for a full report). On August 7 a rally was held in Rodney Square in Wilmington. It had been publicized as an observance of the anniversary of the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, after speeches on Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Vietnam, another reason for the rally was announced; Since mid-July more than 350 people had signed a statement claiming responsibility for the June draft board actions; of these signers about 80 from all over the Northeast were present at the rally. The last speaker, Bill Davidon, then pointed to a red balloon filled with helium which had been floating overhead during the rally. Explaining that the red symbolized brotherhood, community, and socialism, he cut the string and sent the balloon aloft to carry away a plastic bag filled with documents such as tax records, draft records, and induction notices, the more than symbolic representations of injustice, slavery, and death.

BERRIGAN: DELEGITIMIZING THE SYSTEM cont'd. . .

law, if he is to act virtuously and responsibly, must always take the consequences; otherwise, his act is necessarily tainted in the eyes of good men.

"The principle obviously is of interest to those in power. It is a more or less conscious vindication of the social, political and indeed religious status quo. It aims with vigor at the maintenance of law and order in whatever sector, in order to bring even the most passionate conscience under control of unchangeable, presumably beneficent public authority.

"If good men, acting in bad times on behalf of serious change in the very nature and function of public authority can be so coerced, it is quite clear that an impassible limit has been established. Ethical men may, in such a way, even become a powerful support to an evil regime. In paying tribute to the courts, the law, the penal system, they become witnesses to the validity of the structures they seek to confront. Jails, law courts, police, and the social arrangements which depend upon their smooth functioning proceed on schedule to isolate and stifle dissent. The last state of things thus becomes worse than the first."

REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTION TO BE WRITTEN

The Black Panther Party has called for a Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention to write a new constitution guaranteeing the rights of all oppressed peoples. The Convention will be held in November but the Plenary Session, at which much of the work on the Constitution will be done, will be held in Philadelphia on September 4-7. It will begin with films and seminars on the first Constitution, will be addressed by Huey Newton and a Black or Third World woman, and will then break down into workshops on the specific topics to be covered in the new Constitution. The Panthers encourage all who see the need for a new Constitution to come to Philadelphia to help to write it. Check-in for the Plenary Session will begin at 12 noon on Friday, September 4, at the Temple University Gymnasium, Broad and Montgomery Streets, Philadelphia. Housing and transportation will be provided for those who need it. Registration blanks are available from local Constitutional Convention Information Centers or from the Black Panther Party, East Coast Ministry of Information, 1370 Boston Road, The Bronx, New York 11212. 212/328-9911.

FROM THE SOLEDAD PRISON TO THE MARIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The speed with which California authorities denied any connection between the kidnapping of Judge Harold Haley and others at the Marin County courthouse and the trial of the Soledad Brothers in San Francisco calls for a re-examination of both.

Soledad prison is a hell for everyone, but especially for Black inmates. George Jackson, one of the Soledad Brothers, describes it as "twenty-four hours a day, in shifts, the foulest of taunts from the language of racist Amerika". Whites are set against Blacks with savage skill. On January 13, 1970 a racially mixed group of inmates was taken to a new recreational area. Guards did nothing to prevent the inevitable fight, until one guard in a tower shot and killed three Black prisoners and wounded a white inmate. On January 16 a coroner's jury ruled that the deaths were justifiable homicide; minutes later a white guard was found dead. Prison authorities claimed the killing of the guard was an act of revenge, and three Blacks were charged with

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BUILDING A WOMEN'S MOVEMENT cont'd. . .



The influence of this developing movement was evident in many ways. As women grew stronger and gained more confidence from their experiences together, they became less tolerant of the chauvinist attitudes of the men in other activities. They then began forcing the men to deal with their own sexism and the dehumanizing way they treated their sisters. The underground papers began to carry more information by and for women. Women were more often seen as leaders of demonstrations, and more and more groups like the Radical Institute carried on week-end-long consciousness-raising sessions to deal with relationships within the group. Women had fought hard to eliminate the elitism so prevalent in the male-dominated movement. As they learned that anyone can be a leader, the process of collective decision-making/task-sharing became more prominent in integrated (male/female) organizations. People learned to work in groups (instead of on an individual, person-to-person, or "top down" basis) with all members gaining competence in a variety of areas. The alternative ways of relating to one another which the Women's Movement helped initiate created not only equality in the various organizations but also an atmosphere of open, honest understanding more conducive to sensitive human communication.

A strong Women's Movement clearly benefits the rest of the movement for social change, and we hope the Regional Women's Center will help to broaden the Women's Movement beyond its middle-class urban roots to include more rural and working-class women. To do this, we must develop channels of communication with other constituencies (Panther women, mothers in Welfare Rights, women involved in union disputes, etc.); minimal co-ordination has already been developed, for example, in the area of abortion repeal. With the first installment of the RESIST grant we have been able to purchase literature in large quantities and provide it to individual groups or cities at a cost far lower than the prices they would have to pay if they purchased smaller quantities themselves. Part of our grant from RESIST will be used for the nitty-gritty of getting the Center together (rent, phone, equipment and supplies, etc.), thus freeing the money we take in from our part-time jobs and contributions from regional women for resources, publicity, and travel. As the Women's Movement continues to expand, the Regional Women's Center (which will officially open in September) will attempt to respond to the needs of the existing Women's Liberation groups (in Cincinnati, Dayton, Yellow Springs, and Springfield) and those we hope to develop through our work in other communities.

THE POLITICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF SABOTAGE cont'd

these giant corporations are, in fact, the enemy, whose world-wide drive for super-profits is the direct cause of imperialist wars. The movement has failed to substantially educate itself and the general public on the implications of the concept "military-industrial complex". If the giant corporations were clearly understood as the enemy, destruction of their office buildings would have been viewed positively.

Sabotage actions receive very little publicity in the mass media because the ruling class does not want to admit the extent of their damage or to disseminate their political messages for fear of further encouraging the growth of popular sabotage groups within the anti-war movement and elsewhere. To encourage the healthy and useful growth of anti-war sabotage groups, several critical steps should be taken. 1. A nation-wide list of anti-war sabotage acts should be compiled and published. The political statements issued by many of the groups performing these acts should also be compiled and published. 2. A nation-wide movement communications network should be established, with the capability of informing every section of the movement within 72 hours of significant sabotage actions. The political statements of the sabotage groups should receive wide publicity and distribution both within the movement and to the general public. As the repression grows, movement people must become less and less dependent upon ruling class media as their source of information. 3. Sabotage actions should be coordinated with aboveground organizing, so that organizers are able to get maximum political mileage from sabotage acts. However, in no sense should sabotage be considered a replacement for aboveground organizing.

NEWSREEL CATALOG AVAILABLE

Newsreel, the radical film-making organization, has a new film catalog listing more than 50 films on such topics as Laos, Vietnam, Cuba, Latin America, Women's Liberation, Black Liberation, and High Schools. Films are available at a nominal cost - free if necessary - for screenings throughout the country. For the catalog (free) and information, write to: New York Newsreel, 322 7th Avenue, New York City, New York 10001, 212/565-4930.

MANY THANKS TO ALL READERS WHO RESPONDED SO GENEROUSLY TO OUR TYPEWRITER FUND APPEAL. YOU'LL SEE THE EVIDENCE IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER.

FROM THE SOLEDAD PRISON TO

THE MARIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE cont'd. . .

murder. The Soledad Brothers, now facing the gas chamber, are John Wesley Cluchette, Fleeta Drumgo, and George Jackson.

On August 7 George Jackson's younger brother, Jonathan, walked into the Marin County courthouse with a suitcase full of guns, armed three San Quentin convicts in the courtroom (one was on trial; the others were there as defense witnesses), and with their help seized several hostages. When the police opened fire, Jackson, two of the convicts, and the judge were killed. Three other hostages were wounded, one seriously.

The authorities insist that Jonathan Jackson and his comrades were merely hoodlums trying to effect an escape. But that doesn't explain their statement in the courthouse: "We are the revolution; free the Soledad Brothers by 12:30 tomorrow". An examination of the Soledad case explains why these men risked their lives to set the Soledad Brothers free.

Following the murder of the white guard, the Soledad Brothers were held in solitary confinement for 29 days before they were told of the charges against them. Their families were told not to bother to come to their hearings and that there was no need to retain defense lawyers. Before the defense was allowed to see the site where the dead guard was found, the area was completely remodeled. Many of the inmates who might have witnessed the killing have been transferred to prisons all over the state; those who remain at Soledad have been discouraged from testifying in the Brothers' defense. The first judge assigned to the case was so blatantly racist and antagonistic that he had to disqualify himself. The Brothers are brought to court bound with chains around their ankles, waists, wrists, and between their legs, which undoubtedly impresses upon those present their danger and guilt.

While the case of the Soledad Brothers has been publicized and some pressure is being brought to bear in their behalf, their case is in no way unique. What is happening to them and to the other prisoners at Soledad happens to Black people every day, in the prisons of the State and those that are their own communities. Given that reality, the incredibly important message of the raid on the Marin County courthouse is to be found in the fact that it was attempted rather than in the fact that, this time, it failed.